

NOTES FROM THE *Underground*

Ottawa, Canada

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Of Misunderstanding and Sacrifice

Many years ago when my friends were first finding out about my preference for feminine clothes, I got into a heated argument with one of them over my insistence that I had a right to tell my parents about me. I agreed with her that they wouldn't accept or understand it, and told her that was why I wasn't telling them; but I nevertheless maintained the right to do so. She didn't understand me, and accused me of being selfish.

This is a charge that I find is frequently levelled at us. I was watching a tape of a show called *Inquiry* the other day, and I was reminded of this disagreement. The reporter was asking a crossdresser the infamous question "If you had to choose between your female self and your wife, which would you choose?" The crossdresser answered that he'd choose his female self, and so fell into the trap she had set for him.

Personally I wouldn't have answered the question because it, like my friend's understanding of my crossdressing, was based on a false premise. It implies that I have a choice, that crossdressing is not a part of who I am, but rather something I do. It puts crossdressing on the same level as, say, watching too much football on television.

My friend was accusing me of being selfish because she didn't understand how damaging it is to my own mental, spiritual and physical self to deny who I am so that my parents could live in blissful ignorance of their son's true nature. For her, my silence was merely a minor inconvenience. For me, it was an act of self denial.

For this reason, I get annoyed with the "your wife or crossdressing" question. It must be a very deep aspect to one's personality to want to wear women's clothes when there is so much societal pressure not to do so. It is not at all like watching too much football. How can you feel good about yourself when by your silence you are accepting the predominant notion that crossdressers are undesirable people? How can any marriage flourish without self esteem?

There are, of course, crossdressers who have gone to the grave with their crossdressing secret intact. For some, I imagine the fear was greater than the need for revelation. For others, I have no doubt, the secrecy itself brought them to an earlier end. Either way, their lives were acts of self sacrifice that were never acknowledged.

The vast majority of people - crossdressers and non crossdressers alike - are not capable of that kind of sacrifice. And yet it is not uncommon that when a crossdresser finds he cannot keep it quiet for his entire life, the burden of sacrifice, if he is married and his wife did not know before, frequently shifts to his wife. This is not to say that compromise is not possible, only that for some wives it is as hard for them to change their deeply held views as it is for their husband to stop crossdressing. Then the wife must make the decision whether

to get out of the marriage, or to make the sacrifice herself in order for the marriage to survive. There's no selfishness here on either side. Indeed, personal sacrifice requires a lot of personal generosity, frequently more than what people are capable of giving.

We have to hope that with the advances crossdressers have made recently, there will be less fear on the part of the crossdresser to tell his prospective wife beforehand about himself. Compromise is great if it can be done, but self sacrifice is a very difficult way to live.

This issue marks the fourth year we've been putting out NFTU and to celebrate the occasion, I've decided to burn myself out completely by putting together our biggest issue yet. Of course, this wouldn't be possible if the members hadn't contributed so much material. In fact, I must apologize if some contributions didn't make it into this issue, but I received much more than I expected. All in all though, a fine effort by everyone and a good display of the diversity we have in Gender Mosaic.

Ted

Notes from the Underground

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Girls' Night Out

Although you're not likely to miss the notices elsewhere in this issue, let me remind one and all of Gender Mosaic's first fundraiser Wednesday, January 8, 1991. Come out and support us, and meet (we hope) our supporters from elsewhere in the community.

Thanks go out to the Duchess for her energetic efforts on this project.

FACTT

Owing to a shortage of space in last issue, I neglected to include FACTT Ottawa's address. It is:

P.O. Box 5637
Merivale Depot
Nepean, Ont.
K2C 3M1

FACTT is a support and information group primarily serving the transsexual community in Ottawa.

Crossdressers AA

There is some interest in creating an Alcoholics Anonymous group for crossdressers. Interested individuals are asked to write or call Gender Mosaic.

New Executive

Sometime in January, we'll be setting up a time for nominations and elections of the new executive. If you can help, please consider standing for a position. Conversely, please get involved in drafting candidates so that we can steamroller people into these highly prestigious positions.

Memberships and Fees

We have decided to relinquish the calendar year basis for memberships and change to year terms only. In other words, if you paid in March 1991, your dues are due in March 1992. The fees for 1992 remain a very modest \$35.

Costs having gone up, however (despite the optimistic assessments of the federal government), we've had to raise the subscription rates of

N.P.T.U. This will now be \$15 per year, still a bargain considering postage alone. I know, it probably borders on fraud for me to be increasing the subscription rate while sending out the thickest issue of NFTU to date. See! Look at all you get for \$15, and six times a year

too! How can you be without such a precious resource for 15 measly, stinking loonies? It defies the imagination!

Ted

FACTT NOTES

A Selection of abstracts reported in FACTT Ottawa's newsletter.

Male Transsexuals in the Homosexual Subculture

American Journal of Psychiatry, November 1976

The author describes 20 male transsexuals who differ from most discussed in professional studies and from those in media portrayals in that they live in the male homosexual subculture. Furthermore, interviews with these individuals indicated that transsexuals are no more sexually or socially homogeneous than heterosexuals or homosexuals. In general, these men entered the homosexual subculture in their teens; they knew they were not heterosexual and therefore assumed they must be homosexual.

As their gender identity crystallized, homosexual activity became repugnant and they rejected and were rejected by male homosexuals. Being unable to attract heterosexual men, they sought bisexual partners in a futile effort to confirm their identity as females. The author suggests that in addition to efforts to help transsexuals shift their gender identity, psychiatrists should emphasize prevention of this psychopathologic symptom.

Health Professionals' Factual Knowledge and Changing Attitudes Towards Transsexuals.

Social Science and Medicine, 1986.

General practitioners, obstetrician-gynecologists, urologists, psychiatrists and clinical psychologists were randomly surveyed to assess their knowledge of the syndrome of transsexuality and their attitudes toward transsexual patients and sex-reassignment surgery. A low return rate, though, requires that the present data be interpreted prudently.

Over the interval an increasingly liberal and favorable trend in attitudes was noted amongst all medical specialties. "Liberal" refers to a less psychopathological perspective of the syndrome and greater social acceptance of these individuals. In the present sample, G.P.'s tend to hold the most conservative views, while clinical psychologists consistently endorse the most liberal positions. No differences emerged among the five groups of health care professionals on the factual knowledge assessment.

Sexual Identity of 37 Children Raised by Homosexual or Transsexual Parents

American Journal of Psychiatry, June 1978

The author reports on 37 children who are being raised by female homosexuals or by parents who have changed sex: 21 by female homosexuals, 7 by male-to-female transsexuals and 9 by female-to-male transsexuals. The children range in age from 3 to 20 years (mean 9.3) and have lived in the sexually atypical households for 1-16 years (mean 4.9). Thirty six of the children report or recall childhood toy, game, clothing and peer group preferences that are typical for their sex. The 13 older children who report erotic fantasies or overt sexual behaviour are all heterosexually oriented.

Upon Tidying Up

I keep promising myself to organize the library and sift out old material. But old books are like old friends. So as I was sorting through the proposed discards, I found some old treasures that I accumulated in a previous lifetime, and lo and behold, I cleared away the cobwebs and found new ideas in old places and connected with a previous lifetime.

Back in 1969, I acquired a book on "Women's Lib" for the handsome sum of \$2.80: I bought *Masculine/Feminine: Readings in Sexual Mythology and the Liberation of Women* edited by Betty Roszak and Theodore Roszak. And now there it was gathering dust behind other papers equally dusty. I promise myself to clean all this dust away too, but first let's have a good read (again). I

paraphrase the forward which described the stalemate in the "war between the sexes": he is playing masculine, she is playing feminine. He is playing masculine because she is playing feminine. She is playing feminine because he is playing masculine. He is playing the kind of man that she thinks the kind of woman she is playing ought to admire. She is playing the kind of woman that he thinks the kind of man he is playing ought to desire. He is becoming less and less what he wants to be. She is becoming less and less what she wants to be. And they blame each other for not having autonomy, but neither admits it. Instead, each becomes controlling, resentful, spiteful and self-destructive. Each have lost their Self.

I remember my mind-set when I bought that book 22 years ago. I needed to find my Self. Somewhere, somehow, I had lost my sense of Self. I felt that I was an object. Like an actor, I felt that I was being watched, judged, but I could not see myself on stage. I wasn't even sure if I could feel myself. And how would I know what I was to look for? I felt numb. Finding Self became a quest. That is the only true quest that can lead to enlightenment and that quest never ends. I have to remain true to my Self in a world that encourages me to abandon Self and find meaning in Otherness and external referents. I felt alienation and searched for security in external sources, while all along the answers lay within the Self. I can't recall when I started splitting myself up into pieces and stuffing my fragments into hellish pigeon-holes in order to fit into society's expectations. How did these pigeon-holes and partitions get into my head anyway? As I overcame numbness, I felt wounded, bleeding and, at times, even mutilated, with my life draining out from my body from more sites than I could manage. I appeared physically fit, but I felt I was withering away.

Well, I've done a lot of rearranging over the last little while, and discarded lots of old luggage that

was weighing me down. And I am starting to see a Self that is less contorted and no longer mutilated. It has been quite a struggle and I don't expect it will ever end, but I know I can succeed if I have the will. And the strength comes from within, because I like my Self and I will not be anyone other than my Self.

Now let's go back 22 years when I bought this book in an effort to find ways to raise my consciousness with something other than drugs. (The drug scene has always been a cry for help.) Frankly, I got headaches trying to digest the heavy ideas in this book, but it got me to start observing the world from a new perspective. And the more I saw, the less I liked, and the more I realized how

I was being coached, trained, cajoled or outright brainwashed while being told to be something or someone else. It was like waking from a dream and seeing others all around me in a trance with eyes fixed onto a television screen and nodding agreement with

"Who makes the rules? Who makes the roles?"

some man telling them what to feel, think and say. Who makes the rules? Who makes the roles?

Do you realize that the socially defined role of a woman is a modified form of hysteria? Consider the hysteric who has shallow relationships based on security needs, whose relationship with one's body is one of distance in which the body is an alienated object. Hysterical perception is characterized as vague, global, emotive, diffuse, ethereal. A hysteric is dependent on others for identity: he/she sees him or herself as others think of him or her. Hysterics try to fulfill roles that are defined for them, to be what others want them to be. The important point about the woman's role isn't even that it is inferior: a woman's unique identity is made irrelevant. This is the traditional role of women: not to be there as a person. I was encouraged to make myself indispensable, useful, lovable, harmless, and to take my cues from others. I was taught to manage people's impressions of me, so that different people saw me differently, but nobody knew me. I was like a chameleon, but who was I? I learned to mislead so well, I even lied to myself. And yet the only truth we can experience is our Self.

There is a hazard in using the retrospectroscope in that the past will be selectively recalled based on emotional content. Yet that is what contributes to our development as persons. The subjective reaction is probably more significant than the observable event (and who judges the event?). I had my nose broken when I was ten years old when a gang of boys (classmates) followed me home, surrounded me, then took turns kicking and punching me.

Continued page 5

Finally one sat on me and made me eat grass, and broke my nose by bouncing my face into the ground. This was in retaliation for complaining at school about insults, intimidation and manhandling during school hours. A few months later, I was followed home by boys from another class and this time was pushed around, my clothes torn, then tied up and left in a field close to my home. On more than one occasion, I ran home right after school. So I learned things about the world, and felt that boys as a group were not to be trusted; but I didn't learn much about myself, except how to spell fear. To this day I'm still not sure what prompted all this abuse, but what concerns me is how I responded, or failed to cope. But why does the victim assume self-blame? After all, what a person says about me, or how he treats me, tells me more about that person than about me. But I was treated as an object, and not just by those who took a dislike to me, but also by others who treated themselves as objects, all assuming that such was the way of the world. I took a dislike to myself for inviting such abuse from others. I wanted to change this object which people disliked.

I feel that I am not only treated as an object, but it is expected that I treat myself as an object. Within myself I consider myself the same as others. Yet I am given to feel that I don't belong; others sketch a portrait of me that I do not recognize. But since so many claim this portrait to be me, how can I deny it? I have to subject myself to continual self-examination and I have assumed various phantom personalities which haunt me because they are as others see me, yet none are really me. Did this alienation come from my earliest days when I was subjected to social pressure so that my Being-for Others became my collective image, and was reinforced by value judgements and social prohibitions?

The past is gone and cannot be changed. However, I can change in the present and in the future as well. The past should not be forgotten, but neither should it be re-lived. Tidying up is not only a physical exercise, but also has a psychic dimension. Clearing away cobwebs and cleaning off the desk to get ready for action has always been a tonic for me. Throwing out the junk may include defusing bad memories which have functioned as dark currents with an undertow that pull the mind into a depression. It is acceptable to feel pain, but unacceptable to dwell on it. Living is meant to be a joyful experience of emotional and spiritual growth, a process of being and becoming. And the great thing about getting older is that you don't have to lose all the other ages you've been. In fact, you can learn about yourself by reflecting on those past years and see yourself in a new light. Dust off those past experiences and determine what will be treasured and what can be discarded. Living can be grand.

Karen Hope

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A Halloween Story

We've all heard and read about going out on Halloween so this is not new territory, but let me tell you about my own Halloween "en femme". It began a few weeks before when we were holding a staff meeting at work and as the secretary I was taking down minutes. We were going through the agenda item by item, when my boss, Josee, mentioned she would be in costume for Halloween and would like everyone to follow suit. She then turned to me, catching me off guard, and said that of course I'd be disguised, wouldn't I?

It wasn't so much a request as an order, and I said no, but she ignored that and said "good" as if it were all settled. I took some good natured ribbing about being volunteered and was understandably very non-committal, but as the day grew nearer, I began to devise a plan.

I told everyone that if she wants me to be disguised, I'd come as a female secretary with no breasts, so I could fit in with all the other women here. Everyone laughed because I'm sure no one believed I'd do it and to be honest, I wasn't so sure I would. I talked to a few friends who reminded me that I'd done it the previous year. True, but last year was a controlled situation where most of the women at the school knew about me or were pretty sure. I also went to school and then dressed, whereas this year I was planning to leave home dressed. Needless to say, the thought of how I would get to work had me worried.

My niece, Jeanne, who was staying with me at the time, said she'd drive me to work. Jeanne knows all about me and has met most of my friends, both CD and not. With a ride to work, I began to feel good about it all, so I moved my session with my electrolysis person up one day so I wouldn't have a peach fuzz on Halloween.

When Thursday, Halloween, dawned I was ready and willing. So I got all dolled up with my leather mini and leather 3 inch heel boots. I was then to wake my niece, but she was dead tired as she works for herself and had been putting in 10-12 hour days for the last week. I felt bad about rousing her. I figured that I could handle taking the bus. It was Halloween, right? Who would care?

I had taken about ten steps out my door when I began to have serious doubts about the wisdom of all of this, but I screwed up my courage and kept on trucking. Have you ever tried to keep on trucking in three inch heels? No wise person trucks in three inch heels - you mince, you swish, you take tiny, little steps, but you don't truck in three inch heels. Not if you want to last the day in style and dignity. So I slowed down and tried to feel as if this was the most natural sight in the world. When I got to the corner, this guy getting into his car spotted me and his eyes got very big. I tried to lighten the situation with a joke, but he just jumped into his car and locked the door.

Moral, don't try and lighten up anyone, they really

don't want to know and if you address them, they have to deal with it when they'd rather not.

Now I am no Kelli Bundy, but I am not Frankenstein's wife either, so I have to believe that he was weird. Why else would he react this way? I began to wonder if everyone would react like this, but I kept on going hoping that the next person would have a sense of humour. Once at the bus stop, I sat on the bench and waited for my bus. This older woman came to wait for the bus also, and once she realized who I was she began to freak out. So again I tried some humour and again the person freaked. By now, I was really starting to doubt the wisdom of trying to have fun. Luckily when I got on the bus, the bus driver didn't bat an eyelash and one of my co-workers from the regional office was on it. He laughed and laughed, but a good laugh. These two teenaged girls in the back also thought it was great and laughed. So, surrounded by intelligent people, I began to relax.

Rick and I talked and laughed. This woman got on a few stops later and sat down, then looked and a great big smile came across her face and she told me she had to take a few looks to make sure I wasn't a woman. Just goes to show she had taste. By now I was sky high: they liked me. They liked me, but I still had to wait for the bus at St. Laurent alone while Rick took his bus to the regional office. For a minute I was really ill-at-ease, till I realized that most people weren't looking at me and those that were looking at me were enjoying it. No one, not even the construction workers who always are so loud on the bus, gave me a second look or made a bad comment. The Rastafarian fellow kept looking at me and grinning and saying that he loved the outfit. I got a big chuckle out of that.

Jean, a fellow co-worker, stood beside me waiting for the bus, then turned and realized it was me. He got a big kick out of it and I figured if this guy got off on it, then I was safe. Not that he's macho or anything, but he comes across as a very straight-laced person. I loved it. It's weird being on a bus at 7 A.M. dressed to kill and half the people not reading or noticing you and the other half enjoying something out of the ordinary. I realize that I probably made a lot of people's day that morning, giving them something to share over coffee at their offices, and a few men were probably kicking themselves for not doing what I was doing.

When I got to work, I was nervous. The one thing I didn't want to do was insult women or have them think that I was doing it as a put-down. I didn't have to worry. Even this woman who hardly ever smiles looked at me and began grinning from ear to ear. She thought I looked great. One lady came up to me and said she'd

Continued page 7

walked right by me and gone to sit down when Suzette told her who I was. She really enjoyed the costume since she dresses the same way herself. One guy even said that he wanted me, jokingly of course, (yeah, sure). Some said it was really me and others said, with a smile, that it was high time I stepped out of the closet, so I don't know if I've been more obvious than I supposed or they were just joking. They still talk to me, so even if I've been read it doesn't matter to them.

Of course, the big boss who hadn't been around to our building in months decided to visit the district that day. He laughed a lot of people sure laughed that day but not derisively. It was more in amazement that I had a certain "je ne sais quoi" about me. His only problem was that my back seam was crooked. Why do some people notice that right away and why are they looking at my rear (eh, Joanne)? My boss Josee could not get over it, she still can't. Methinks she had her doubts and they were blown away that day. She wanted to steal my boots: she seems to wear a lot of leather so my boots would be her. Luckily, my size is not petite anymore.

I have to work the reception a few times during the day while Angie goes to the powder room so, of course, I had to work it that day. No one said a word, although I did get a few strange looks. The worst was this guy who came in and asked to see an officer and then straight faced asked if this was costume day. Needless to say, I answered no. We both laughed, and when Angie returned, he told her she was better looking, but just. The wild thing is that even the day before everyone said they wouldn't dress and yet that day over 75% of our floor was costumed so I didn't really stand out (as he rolls his eyes). The entire sixth floor, 50 or so workers, came up to see me at my office and comment on how I looked. I felt like a show thing, but I didn't mind. They all made comments in good nature and so I responded likewise.

It was no great liberation as it was Halloween, but I got to get on two buses dressed, made a lot of people chuckle and gave them a good story to

tell for a day or two. I was also able to be myself, as I really am, and feel good about my being dressed as a woman. At lunch, I was voted as having the best costume and the most believable persona, as it were, and the most guts for coming on the bus. A few guys did say that they had considered the same costume, but had chickened out. The few who were negative, I ignored and by doing so showed them that I was who I was and that their problem was their problem, not mine.

The only bad (?) thing is that a week later when I told Josee that I was leaving early to go shopping with the hour they owed me, she asked what kind of clothes I was shopping for, and she wasn't kidding. She also asked if there was a sale on for leather skirts that she hadn't heard of. I told her that I would have let her know, which is what I did a few weeks later. When I mentioned this suede sale, she just grinned and wondered aloud about how a lot of suede skirts are flaring out. I told her she wouldn't have to worry about these skirts, and we just laughed. That's what Halloween is all about, laughing at yourself and with everyone else and not having one mean thought in your heart.

Niki-Ross

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The Trials and Satisfactions of a She-Male

My life is unusual, I guess. I think that it is safe to say that I am living full time as a she-male, and although it is hard work first thing in the morning, I find it very fulfilling.

The only thing I really have to say to any transsexual or aspiring trannie is go for it. I tried for years to be male without any success in any endeavour. Since I naturally don't have the ability to be masculine, I either gave the impression of being a complete fruitcake, or, in situations where it was totally inappropriate to be myself, very shy and lacking in confidence. With my body getting closer to my psyche, I am being taken more seriously by anybody that I encounter, with only a few exceptions. In situations where I felt uncomfortable, because I was a fag, I feel confident, because I am now allowed to act the way I am naturally inclined to do.

The adventure my life has become is enough to keep me in stitches. In one case, I just bumped into some gentleman on the street. We stopped at the Elephant and Castle and had a Perrier. He invited me for dinner so we went to Sante's across the street and had a wonderful meal where he footed the tab (close to three digits). I insisted that he not expect any hanky panky when we got back to the hotel room. So we chatted for a while, and since during dinner we talked about things kinky, he asked me if I had a real unfulfilled sexual fantasy. I had to think about it for a while because I am pretty close to thinking that, yes,

I HAVE done everything. When he came out of the washroom two or three minutes later, I told him that yes, I did think of a sexual fantasy. To be a complete woman. What freaked me out most is that he had no idea what I was talking about, and it took a little bit of talking to convince him I was male. (The physical evidence was there, but he did NOT want to see it.) I never came so close to cracking up in my life. The situation was hilarious.

When men come on to me, I am blunt about what it is that is physically impossible to do to me. I make no bones about it. What's wild is that the reaction is usually one of interest, not what I had expected when I started this half a year ago. You would be surprised at how many men out there actually just groove on girls with pricks...you figure it out. I still can't.

I am going to miss the shock value when my name change finally goes through. It is so hilarious when you see the reaction of somebody looking at your identification and then looking at you and then looking at the identification and muttering under their breath that now they have seen everything. I've had so much fun saying back to them that yes, I am presently a Mr. "You mean, you've never met a she-male before? You have to be kidding me...no, I am not Paula, yes, that is my ID. Come on, give me a break, what do I have to do to prove it to you? ..." It is neat when you know you are almost unique and have enough confidence to put the other person on the spot.

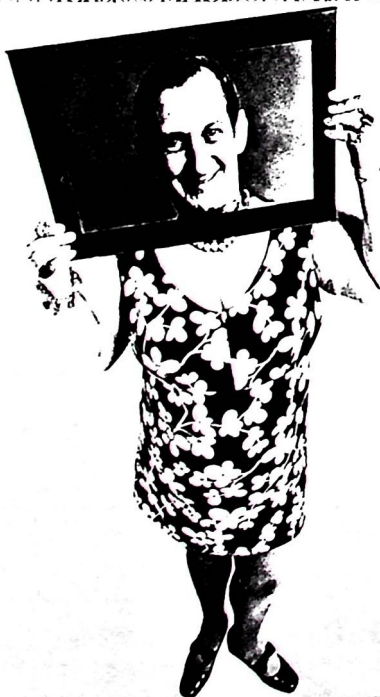
The only thing I have to watch is on those days when I get overconfident and do so little that I get read like an open book. It's also a drag when there are high winds or pouring rain and the illusion I've put together goes the way of the dodo. From what I hear, it gets easier and easier, but I still can't walk out the door without at least some time spent on the hair and especially without make-up. The nails cannot look rally. You can't walk out in just a sweat top and jeans. I put more effort everyday into plucking and preening than most models. And walking out the door as a man is a thing of the past. Being stuck in between the two sexes, I can't walk down the street to get a pack of smokes without at least half an hour preparation.

Being a full time trannie is definately not all roses. The hormones send you for a loop. I think I've got more mood swings than most schizophrenics. Being made up all the time and keeping your heels in good shape costs a mint. Not to mention those times when nothing is working with the hair or the face and you know you have to be somewhere in twenty minutes. Not to mention the trouble that the family has with it.

But the fun that can be had makes up for it. Life is an adventure to be lived. And being yourself is the most worthwhile adventure I can think of.

D.R. Coltridge-Peters

INSTANT FRAMES
BONNIERS, 605 MADISON AVE. AT 57TH ST.



Joanne Goes West

On August 20, 1991 I did what most crossdressers wish they could do in a life time. I went to a travel agency dressed in my femme clothes and purchased a ticket on Air Canada to Vancouver B.C.

When I woke that day I felt good, as I had been preparing myself for this day for several months. I started with a shower and a close shave; next I cleansed my face, applied moisturiser and took extra care with my make up. The transformation took about one and a half hours of dabbing and highlighting my feminine features. I put on a lacy bra and matching half slip, nylons and added pink Cutex to my nails. Next a fuschia blouse, matching skirt, high heels and necklace. Then I put on my wig and combed it out, grabbed my purse, looked in the full length mirror in my bedroom and saw Joanne standing there. I grabbed my apartment keys, locked the door behind me and headed for the elevator, listening to my heels on the tile floor in the hallway. Oh what a day this will be.

I jumped in my car and drove to Parliament Travel Centre in Ottawa, where an older gentleman greeted me as I entered the office. He offered me a seat in front of his desk and I sat down and gave him in my softest possible voice my agenda for the trip. He did not turn his head or raise an eyebrow. As time passed, I was feeling confident as he asked me about flight times, departures and arrivals. To make the illusion complete, I gave him Joanne's credit card after he had entered all the information in the computer. A few minutes later a copy of a confirmed reservation started printing out and I signed my credit card to finish the transaction. The travel agent handed me my ticket in the name of Ms. Joanne L. I left the office elated and then went window shopping to try and wind down from the day's experience.

September 30, 1991

This is the day I have been waiting for. I made arrangements with

Sande for a facial and make up session before I headed to the airport. I was wearing a burgundy blouse and tan skirt with matching accessories and comfortable low heeled shoes. As usual, Sande did a perfect makeup application and then took some pictures of me afterwards in her studio. The adrenalin was flowing pretty good now as my mother drove me to the airport for my 18.30 flight. She dropped me off at the terminal with my two suitcases and flight bag and took a few more pictures of me outside the terminal.

At the Air Canada wicket, I was lucky to get a window seat on flight 139 to Vancouver. I walked around the terminal for one and a half hours before entering the flight take off area. Security passed the magic wand over me, and my flight bag went through the scanner. At this time I was as close as you can get to anybody and was not read. The flight was 45 minutes delayed because of the air traffic controller's strike. I must have walked about three miles walking up and down the terminal. Finally we were allowed to board the plane. I was looked at by a lot of people, including R.C.M.P. special agents, flight persons and stewards walking around the restricted area. I boarded the plane and found my seat just past the wing on the right side of the plane. I could see all the activity on the tarmac from my window. After a few minutes, a middle aged couple sat down beside me. All of a sudden, I felt like a sardine, as I had never in my life flown. Here I am a crossdresser in a big silver bird scared to make a move or say anything. I knew that I was going to be sitting in that seat for the next five hours so I tried to relax. Oh sure. The plane finally left the terminal and started to taxi down the runway. The jet engines roared as we picked up speed and my heart was in my mouth as the plane took off. I eventually calmed down as the earth below me became a haze and the initial shock of the take off subsided. During the flight I only talked to the person beside me for a few

minutes, watched the on flight movie and ate a chicken dinner. I tried not to drink liquids so I wouldn't have to disturb the people beside me to use the washroom.

We landed in Vancouver at 21.30 Pacific Standard Time, but 12.30 A.M. Eastern Time. I was hoping to meet a member of the Cornbury Society at the terminal, but it never came to be. So I took a cab to the Biltmore Hotel, which Joanne had reserved. I talked to the cabbie and he explained a few of the sights to see while in Vancouver. At the hotel he carried my luggage into the lobby and also opened the door for me. A tip was in order, as he left me at the front desk in the lobby. I registered and headed to my room to freshen up.

I was still on a high and it was still early in the evening so I went to the lounge for a nightcap. It had been over 19 hours now and I was having a hard time getting off cloud nine. Finally I went back to my room, watched some television and then dozed off.

October 1

The weather was just perfect as I looked out my hotel window and saw the landscape of Vancouver and the Rockies for the first time. What a sight! The night before I had asked about a tour of the city and surrounding area. The desk clerk had booked me on one and I was to be ready at 11.00 in the lobby of the hotel. I did all the necessary things to make myself beautiful, donned a brown leather skirt with a peach coloured sweater and a good pair of walking heels, as the tour was over four and a half hours long. I passed the room attendants as I left my room and gave them a smile. They smiled back. I took the elevator to the lobby, sat in one of the big, soft sofas and waited for the Land and Sea tour bus to arrive. We went to a few other hotels to pick up other tourists.

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Every time we stopped, the tour operator introduced us to the new passengers and I felt happy as I was introduced as Joanne. We went to see all the tourist stuff, stopping at places like Stanley Park, the gondola up Grouse Mountain and the Capilano suspension bridge over a rocky gorge. Trying to navigate this in heels was a real challenge. I became more comfortable as I talked with people on the tour. If they read me, they did not show any signs of rejection. The feeling of being a part of a group like this was beyond anything I could imagine. We took some pictures and the tour operator drove us back to our hotels. What a day! Back to my room to freshen up again and then to the hotel dining room for supper. I then tried to reach one of the girls for whom I had a phone number in the Cornbury Society. She could not make it for a visit and would not give me a phone number of any other members of the club. I don't know why they put their name in Tapestry, especially a full page article, if they will not receive sisters from around the country.

October 2

This is shopping day. I dressed in a very casual skirt and blouse and my walking shoes and took public transit to Metrotown Mall. This mall is huge; there are over 400 stores. I walked for about three hours, had a salad and coffee, got lost and one hour later found the bus depot. I then went downtown to the larger department stores like Pacific Center and Robinson Square and walked around the core of the city. I noticed a lot of panhandlers and street people sitting along the edge of the street. I tossed a loonie to a musician playing the theme from Friendly Giant on the harpsicord; he was really good. I bought a few souvenirs in a store along the strip and took the electric bus back to my hotel to rest awhile. The bus was packed, as it was 5:30, but I had no problems. For supper that night I went to a Vietnamese restaurant across the street and had rice with something, very delicious. I concluded the evening

with a few drinks at the hotel lounge and then back to my room.

October 3

Today I went into the closet and turned the light off because I had to meet my niece and a family friend who live in Surrey and White Rock, B.C. As I left my room dressed as my male self, I passed the same room attendants. One of them asked me if I was leaving and I said that I was staying until Saturday in room 538. A puzzled look came over her face as I gave her a tip and continued on down the corridor to the elevator. I rented



a car that day and the next and saw a lot of the coast. I drove my friend back to her place in White Rock and then back to my hotel to rest up. That night I went down to the pub, played pool, talked football and had a few ales with the boys.

October 4

Happy birthday to me. Thirty nine again. Today I went to Stanley Park to Visit the Vancouver Aquarium and Zoo. I got to see the newborn killer whale. I wore a very comfortable skirt and sweater and again a good pair of walking heels. The aquarium was packed with kids from the schools. I went into the underground tunnels to observe the fish life below water level.

This place is worth the admission charge. I got a tourist to take a picture of me standing in front of the main entrance to the aquarium and spent the rest of the day there. That evening I drove my rented car all over downtown looking for the night life. I was not going to take the chance of walking the streets en femme so I observed the low life and the high life of the Vancouver strip from safe inside my car.

October 5

I went into my closet again as today I had to return the car, sign out of the hotel and get to the Greyhound bus terminal. The desk clerk did not notice anything as I signed Joanne's credit card. I grabbed my suitcases, called a cab and got a ride to the bus depot. There I purchased a ticket for Calgary. This is a long 15 hour trip up the Fraser Valley to Kamloops then on to Calgary. It was dark when we actually got into the Rockies so I did not see very much, but I was planning a trip into Banff in the next few days.

October 6

I arrived in Calgary at 5:30 A.M. The bus got a flat tire just outside of Golden, about 80 miles from Calgary. I was tired and took a cab to the Flamingo Motel, which Brian from Illusions had recommended. I slept most of the day trying to get myself back together. That night I called my ex-sister-in-law. We had supper in a pizza joint and talked about old times. It was nice to see her again after about 20 years. I think we have aged a few years. She drove me back to the motel and I watched television for awhile before falling asleep.

October 7

I called Barbie's lingerie and told her that I was in town and she said she was expecting me. I dressed in my leather skirt and yellow sweater with matching shoes and accessories..

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I took a cab to B&B Leather Works where I met Barbie and Brian. There were a few customers in the store. We talked for awhile and Barbie showed me around. Then she took me to the back of the store, where behind a closed door was a huge room decorated like a lounge, with a bar, reception area, patio chairs and tables, a dance floor and balloons with streamers. This is the meeting place for the Illusions Club, and only members and guests are allowed in. I met a few members sitting at the bar drinking coffee and spent the next few hours there. They must have drank about six pots of coffee. As it was a work day, everybody left early. I made arrangements to meet a few people at a rock and roll bar near my motel. I got a ride back to my room and freshened up to have supper. That evening I had a few drinks with my new friends. It was nice to have people to chat with for a change, especially members of the club. We had a nightcap and then I walked back across the street to my room.

October 8

I went shopping today downtown using the public transit C' Train. Walking to the terminal, which was about 15 minutes, I felt my feet starting to ache. When I got downtown to the first shoe store, I purchased a pair of comfortable heels and relaxed on the mall. Each major mall is connected by a bridge over the street to the next mall. Five hours later I headed back to my motel to put my feet up. That night Barbie and Bree were having a reception for me at the club and I was going to meet some more members. Twenty five people showed up to welcome me to Calgary. Wendy picked me up and as I was getting into her car, I split my satin skirt up the back seam, so I had to change into my leather skirt. At the club I met some of the people that I saw yesterday, but in femme form. Everybody was just great and I felt at home amongst these girls. I was given the V.I.P. treatment. Barbie took me to the back of the club and showed me the change area, make up room,

locker and shower facilities - everything that a club needs to help crossdressers who cannot dress in their own home. I was happy to see the volunteer effort put in by the members to make the place work. We drank several pots of coffee during the evening. Each person cleaned up their own dirty dishes before they left. The reception lasted a couple of hours and again it was a work day the next day. Wendy drove me back to my motel and we talked. She said that she was planning a visit to Montreal in November.

October 9

I got up early to catch the 9:00



A.M. bus to Banff. I wore a dark brown skirt and a brown print blouse. The weather was calling for cool temperatures so I put on my heavy sweater. The bus ride into Banff was spectacular: flat landscape along the highway and then all of a sudden huge rock formations jutting out of the ground. You have to see it to believe it. As we got closer, we could see snow on the peaks of the mountains. The bus drove into valleys with the Rockies on both sides. In Banff I did all the tourist things including taking the gondola up Sulphur mountain. From the top of the mountain, you could see for miles. Banff was the size of a dime. The wind almost blew my wig off and it was cold. I am not used to these conditions,

especially in a skirt, so I headed for the indoor lookout pavilion. I think that I was the only one wearing a skirt, as everybody wore slacks and sneakers. Stupid me.

Back down the mountain to the hot springs and the Banff Springs Hotel. What a hotel, and huge! This is the hotel you see in all the travel vouchers. I took the Greyhound back to Calgary and that evening went to a real country and western bar. It was early and not many people were there. There were no stools at the bar, but they had western saddles with stirrups. Quite a novelty. I sat near the dance floor and watched a couple dance the real western two step and shuffle. The decor was like a real western saloon, with mannequins dressed in period costume above the dance floor looking down at the patrons. After, I headed back to my motel and fell asleep.

October 10

I packed my dresses and skirts, put on jeans and sweatshirt and got on a bus to Edmonton. In Edmonton I took a cab to the River Valley Inn, where I met Brian from the Calgary Illusions Club. I checked in, had supper with Brian in the dining room of the inn, then we went to prepare for the night, as this was a meeting night for the Illusion Club and we were going to have a safe bar crawl in Edmonton. I was running out of clothes and laundry facilities were not accessible, so out comes the leather skirt and sweater again. I headed to Bree's room and met some members of the Illusion Club. Marsha told us that we were going to a new bar in town called Club 101 on Jasper St. Then to Boots and Saddles and finally the Roost. All these places cater to the underground people, and we were most welcome. I even got a cut in the entry fee because I was an out-of-towner. We had a good time, and as usual the night had to end, so Marsha drove me back to the hotel and we made arrangements for the Friday night bash.

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October 11

I went shopping at the West Edmonton Mall. This place is humungous, to say the least. I took public transit, but had to walk five blocks up a steep hill to catch the bus. My legs were getting used to walking in heels by now and after six hours of shopping in the mall, I was just getting started. I took the submarine ride, watched them feed the dolphins, almost got run over by the train in fantasyland and envied the people in the wave pool. After window shopping and a bite to eat, it was time to head back and get ready for a wild evening. Marsha picked me up at 9:00 with some more girls in her car and we did the social clubs again, where I met some more girls from Illusions. We chatted and drank till the wee hours of the morning. I got a drive back to my room, fell asleep and woke up at 11:00 A.M.

October 12

I relaxed for most of the day and only went shopping close to the hotel for a few hours. The winds picked up to 50 to 70 mph in the afternoon and I had a hard time trying to get back to my room with the wig that I just bought. Marsha again picked me up, with the same girls, and we did the circuit again, but this time there was a female impersonation show at the Roost. The place was packed and a lot of crossdressers showed up. I would guess about 1/3 of the patrons were either TV or TS. The show was lipsync voices with the performers acting to the music. During the night, I made arrangements to go flea market shopping on Sunday with Marcel. I said bye to everybody and thanked them for a great week in Alberta. At 3:00 o'clock, the designated driver got me back to my room.

October 13

Marcel picked me up and we went to a few flea markets in Edmonton. I bought a few pieces of jewelry and Marcel showed me the town. We had supper at a nice restaurant and he drove me back. He showed me some pictures of him in "costume", gave me a picture of Michelle and another friend Colleen, and then left, as it was getting late and I had an early wake up call on Monday.

October 14

Wake up call at 4:30 A.M. I had to meet the air porter bus at 6:00 so I had to rush and finish packing all but the skirt and blouse that I planned to wear on my flight home. My make up had to last several hours so I took extra care. After a last check of my room, I grabbed my suitcase and headed to the lobby to wait for the bus. While in the lobby, I signed all the paperwork for the room and thanked them for an enjoyable stay in Edmonton.

I got to the airport at 6:45, lined up at the Air Canada wicket to get my luggage on board and reserved my seat on the plane. I was able to get a window seat again at the back; no problem at the wicket for flight 106 to Toronto and Ottawa. I had two hours to wait so I went to the cafeteria for a coffee and to finish the notes of my trip. Passing through the security check was no problem. I boarded the plane at 8:15 and we took off at the scheduled time of 8:30 A.M.

Four hours later we landed in Toronto for a 45 minute stopover. My face was taking a real beating, as I was not able to repair my make up on the flight except for a short powder in the cubicle at the back of the plane and to freshen my eyeliner, rouge and lipstick. In Toronto (here's the best part), the Ottawa Rough Rider football club boarded the plane to Ottawa. I watched them take their seats in front of me about five rows up. A lot of hoopla and laughing took place as they kidded with the flight crew. I sat very quietly. We left Toronto at 3:55 and landed in Ottawa at 4:55, right on target. I got off the plane and waited for my luggage at the turnstile.

My mother and brother were waiting for me there along with 200 other people. My brother grabbed my luggage and we headed for the car. I carried the smaller bag out of the terminal.

We had a bite to eat at a hamburger joint and I was glad to head home. It had been a long day, even with the time zone change. When I got home, I put my feet up on my living room table and recalled my trip. It was a fantastic two weeks.

Postscript

The girls at Illusions really have something going. Barbie, Bree, Marsha, Wendy, Michelle, Colleen and everybody in Calgary and Edmonton, thank you for a fantastic holiday. I know that a lot of effort, time and volunteer work was required to get Illusions off the ground and it's growing leaps and bounds because of this work. The cost is minimal compared to the fun the girls have. It's good to have a place to go and the friendship that is born and companionship which will last a lifetime is the result of this effort. The friendship each one of you gave to me will not be forgotten. Thanks a million.

Joanne

**Our unabashed dictionary
defines "Sex-change surgeon" as
a gender amender.**

Dispelling Myths

There are so many myths we all have about others. I'm in the process of letting go of several of mine, and I'm always encountering and dealing with new ones. One of the biggest myths I've been letting go of is the idea that people won't like me because of my gender orientation.

In the past few months I feel I've gone through an amazing stage of personal growth. I still have a lot of getting myself together to do before I'll get to be the person I feel I truly am and before I earn the rights to start living that life. But more and more I'm finding an inner peace. I'm sometimes surprised when I catch myself being happy in spite of my situation. For the first time, I'm positively accepting the way I am and I'm feeling hopeful about my future. Sometimes you just have to stop fighting yourself. You have to grant yourself permission to be who you really are. That means admitting certain things to yourself that you might not like, but you have to be prepared to deal with and face. Then the real work begins because you have to be prepared to accept the responsibility for your own life and your own actions. That's the scary part, because once you start to do this, then you're really living.

I've been letting go of many expectations I've had of other people either to accept me or not accept me. I've been letting go of how I think others should act or feel about certain things. I now place no expectations on anyone to be a certain way based on their manner, orientation or presentation.

It's an incorrect and unfair assumption that we make on human nature when we're always assuming that the general society at large is going to reject us because we are crossdressers, transvestites or transsexuals. When was the last time any one of us went up to a complete and total stranger and asked him or her what (s)he thought of us? Is there any documented proof that society downtrods us? As far as I know, there have never been any surveys proving that the ninety percent of the people we think won't accept us actually wouldn't. The real crux of the matter lies in facing up to this truth and realizing that the only one who is giving you a hard time is yourself. If you don't feel good about what you are doing, then it is only natural to assume that others will feel the same way. And I've seen it happen to me many times. People have changed a lot in the past twenty years, and we have to let go of the old time idea that we are faced with guaranteed rejection from society.

I've been daring to go out into the real world and trying to be with non TS/TV people while presenting myself as a TS male. I'm finding that a great many people accept me positively. Most people in this day and age are either open to the concept, or they just don't care. The only time the typical person might get upset is if it's their son, daughter etc. who is going through it. Sure there is always

going to be some people who don't like it, just like everyone of us carries some sort of prejudice or dislike about something inside our hearts. But for the most part, I think we are far too paranoid about how downtrodden we are. It's really our own problem and most of it comes from ourselves. Once you have enough self acceptance and self love within yourself, then you get the courage to stand up for yourself and how you feel. You can't wait for everyone to tell you it's all right.

In the last issue Niki wrote about "our movement", but I don't think there is a movement whereby we're marching forth into battle for our own self emancipation. Gender Mosaic, at its base level, is nothing more than a group for people who like to crossdress. This doesn't automatically imply that all group members are strong feminist supporters, conservative, liberal, sexist, non-sexist, or ready to go on a march. I agree that we all should embrace an open, non-sexist attitude towards all genders, but the reality of the situation is that not everyone is capable, equipped, ready or meant to do so. And you can't be always berating people for their faults.

I stopped bitching about the way people are and decided just to take control of my own life. There's no point in sitting and waiting for a rosier world to come along before I'm going to live in it. There's no point in expecting human nature to change overnight. I can try to improve things in my surrounding environment and everyone should try to do that too, but like many I too am battling my own skeletons and I know I'm not being as loving to others as I could be. That's why Gender Mosaic has not gone out on any rights campaigns. We tend to sit around saying how we're all right, but how many of us are really, fully comfortable with ourselves?

I'm quite tired of talking about such things as Tri-Ess, how nobody likes us, or how we're all not enough one way or another. Let's quit complaining, accept that we will always have our differences and leave it at that. We can work to improve things, but there's no point in reliving the pain of the past. We must most importantly quit putting our own negative conceptions about ourselves into others and thus keep expecting them - the general public - to not accept us. Our lack of acceptance by society comes from us not feeling good enough about ourselves to feel that we deserve to be accepted. You just have to go and do it, go out there, be presentable and honest and your chances for acceptance are good. It's scary that we have to fix ourselves before we can go any further, but it's the only way we will reach our dreams.

Sharon

Another View of the Twentieth Century

There was something about "Into the 20th Century", that brought out the devil's advocate in me. Despite the concluding remark that alternative views were futile, I feel compelled to offer my reactions. In no particular order...

The Evil Tri-Ess Empire

I think it's extreme to think of this organization as a collection of sexist chauvinists in drag, pinking it up on Tootsy's version of an old boy's net.

Let us recall some facts. This is a group which has grown to become national in scope, with chapters in nearly every state and province. They've been a resource for thousands of crossdressers. Just by being there, they have allowed countless people to break their situations of isolation by introducing them to others like themselves. They have done a lot of outreach through the media, educational and medical systems. They are an organization that actually bends over backwards trying to help the wives of crossdressers. Compare that to clubs here in Canada which have just started to interact with each other beyond the exchange of newsletters. I think it's slightly presumptuous of us to suggest we "get rid of" Tri-Ess. Would we be ready to pick up the slack? Hardly.

I will grudgingly agree that there should be some adjustments, a few minor improvements that should be made before Tri-Ess becomes the model after which all crossdressing clubs should follow. The reasons for that, I will admit, are flimsy, and deal more with perceptions than "facts".

First was viewing one of the founders of Tri-Ess on a host of talk shows. I find myself listening as this "leader of the community" is telling the world how all crossdressers are participating in some asexual spiritual endeavour. Listening to her, one got visions of prim ladies in rocking chairs surrounded by soft light with Heidi and her sheep yodelling in the background. So here I am, sharpening the spurs on my six-inch oxfords, and getting the message that I'm not a "normal" transvestite. Really! Defense mechanisms activated, I immediately stereotyped Tri-Ess as suppressed conservatives whose only idealized form of femininity was to pass at the supermarket. More distressing though, was her obvious demonstration of homophobia. Her whole tone insinuated that if one was heterosexual, it then made the act of crossdressing acceptable. Whatever their PR department says on their reasons for not letting gay crossdressers into their club, I'd say the real reasons are less flattering. Rather ironic since it's only us "straight TV's" that ever really eroticize the clothes we wear.

I suspect their fear of homosexuality extends even further and includes anything that smacks of sexuality or eroticism. Reading their newsletters it seems all they talk about is nail care and how good the salads were at their meetings. Any topic

or mode of behaviour which is taboo and does not meet some self-imposed "norm" gets discouraged for the sake of appearance.

I see Tri-Ess as a group with impressive planning skills and considerable organization. With these, they have given people a little bit more liberty. Crossdressers can now dress up in living rooms eating finger foods, instead of taking ladylike steps in front of a motel mirror. Liberty, however is not freedom. What they have done is the equivalent of giving a zoo animal a slightly larger cage. Tri-Ess, in other words, is a giant exercise in conformity. They are unwittingly reinforcing the very social barriers which have ostracised crossdressers throughout history. They are enthusiastically participating in a form of self-imposed apartheid. Like priests hiding under a cloak of moral superiority their hierarchy is filled with power hungry zealots nursing their unemancipated male egos by feeding on the guilts and vulnerabilities of defenceless, insecure crossdressers.

The Spanish Inquisition were the Brady Bunch in comparison. Fetishists will soon be tattooed for identification purposes. All drag queens will be rounded up and sent down to Alabama for orderly disposal. All transsexuals who are not lesbians will have their penises permanently re-attached.

I say we have to put a stop to this! I say we go down there and roust out these drivelling charlatans in their tailored business suits, their no-heeled walking shoes, and Betty Crocker Wigs! I say we hang them up by their Anita Bryant bra straps and then riddle them with light-armoured piercing rounds and Glazer Safety slugs! Yaaaah! Anarchy Now!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Uhhmm... Yes.....Well... Anyways, I really just wanted to point out that the author's "tone" was not conducive to initiating meaningful dialogue.

Sexism

There were serious allegations on the "rampant sexism" in our community. Is it possible to obtain specifics? Sexism has different meanings to different people and I think it's important to establish some reference points before any real discussion can take place. To tell you the truth, I don't see cross-dressers exploiting women; it just doesn't happen. Or is there a suggestion being made that we all demand pay cuts in our "male" jobs; ask for 72 cents of every dollar in our salary to equalize ourselves with women? Is that to help us capture the feminine mystique? Don't misinterpret this. Women's equality is one of the great social goals of our generation. Before we all turn into good Samaritans let us remember: it wasn't enough that he was good; he had money too. We are not going to be at the cutting edge of social reform if we're wondering about how we're going to pay our bills.

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Creation Myths

Ah yes... the book of Genesis and the patriarchal form of Western society it spawned through Judaic-Christian religion, which has made it tough for women, and by default cross-dressers. So, its a problem; how shall we solve it? Let's see, the Romans tried lions; that didn't work. The Nazis applied more scientific methods with little success. Stalin expended great energies and offered no quarter in enforcing legislated atheism to no avail. So be it. These methods are hardly conducive to good PR anyways.

How about discrediting the book of Genesis itself from an intellectual point of view? You would think every time one of these evangelists gave their literal translations of Genesis that people would double over in laughter. But no, there are lots of people who, in a recession, are pulling into their pockets for \$500 to give to one of these crackers. All so God won't take time out from his busy schedule to come down and give him a chewing out.

Genesis is a story which was originally written on something little better than stone tablets. It was written at a time when people still inferred that a poor harvest was caused by an insufficient number of virgins being sacrificed. If Genesis was written today, and that person tried to sell it as history, she would be measured for a straight jacket. The book of Genesis is a myth. Most people know its a myth. At the same time it is not going to be placed beside Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes on library shelves. Even if it was, do you think sexism would be destroyed? We're a couple of thousand years too late.

You see the fact remains that a whole lot of people, good people, use the concept of God to get through the day. To tell you the truth there's really nothing wrong with that. I've asked for a little magic powder more than once myself to get through things as earthly as final exams.

The real problem lies not in the concept of God, but those self-inflicted institutions of misery called organized religions. Before science had a chance to act as a counterweight, these establishments inserted themselves as middle-men who have exploited our ability to think in mystical terms. Their basic premise is this, "If you want God to help you out, you have to have faith, and follow a few rules".

Supplicant earthquake victims and rosary packing students who don't study, can tell you all you need to know about faith.

Then there are the rules. On the surface they seem sugar

coated indeed, until one looks at some of the bylaws. "Love your neighbour" exhorts the priests, who then proceed to chastise parishioners for not eating fish on Friday. The Koran has similar teachings, and yet not kneeling east five times a day facing Mecca has made all Americans infidels, free game to feel the wrath of Allah through his chosen instrument of jihad. Mohammed never did count on cruise missiles though. Mother Theresa is rightly regarded as a saintly person. God knows how many children in misery she's helped. Yet the fact remains that the Church's incredible abhorrence

Girl's Night Out

The Zipper Club,
340 Somerset St. West

Wednesday, January 8th, 1992

From 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

\$10.00 cover charge

For Transvestites, Transsexuals,
Crossdressers, and their Admirers

Gender Mosaic
CROSSDRESSING SUPPORT GROUP

run out of work. I browsed through Genesis. I read the line commending us to "be fruitful and multiply". I never did run across a timetable or production schedule.

They bleat out platitudes expounding the noble virtues of love, tolerance and self-acceptance but cannot see beyond their collected alms and catechism books to understand what that really entails. It is this atrophied state of thinking that religions have encouraged that has caused the majority of problems in today's society. Everything from racism, to sexism, to stereotyping, to wars have been initiated by people with self-serving agendas who have exploited people's underdeveloped capability to reason.

Of course, crossdressers, who take up only a page or two in boring psychology texts under social deviancy, get sucked up and sometimes even add to this whirlpool of vomit.

Anyways, now that I'm in really good humour...

The (Put Your Label Here) Movement - Jello on Springs?

It's been noted that one of the great strengths of our club is how a diverse group of people such as ourselves all interact and contribute their knowledge and perspectives to a common pool from which everyone draws. The benefits of this are obvious. This logic can of course be taken above the individual level to that of crossdressing clubs themselves. The last year did show some promise in that respect. There can therefore be little doubt that carrying this to other than trans-gender type groups can lead to positive things: as long as that interaction concentrates on that general ethos which we have in common, and nothing else.

When I look at what's happening down south I must admit though that I have a sense of foreboding. There are many reasons, but the main one is that we are about to become a "SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP". This is a development which at best will give us only limited benefits, at the risk of greatly sapping our time and energies away from more productive activities. (If you thought the feminists are struggling with the labels being put on them, that is nothing compared to what we have in store.)

As soon as a "movement" becomes a "special interest group" it has mutated from being a natural force, a medium for bringing about social change, to an exercise in selfishness; a group of parasitic people with blinders pursuing a singular agenda. A group of people with no perspective who are chasing a fantasy that has no connection to the full spectrum of reality. They become a chip on a board game, putty in the manipulative hands of those who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

True, there are special interest groups which can wield considerable power and influence in the political arena. However, to do so they must be able to do one or both of the following: a) wield

economic clout (the military industrial complex, oil companies, General Motors, the province of Quebec) b) demonstrate the ability to vote as a block (National Rifle Association, the gay community, the Jewish Lobby, the province of Quebec)

In my mind crossdressers can do neither at this time, and as such, governments are not likely to take their attention from other pressing matters to give us the time of day.

It is also arguable that protective laws are in themselves of limited use to us. Women are equal under the law, but often have to find equality in humiliating courtrooms. This, after hundreds of years of feminism, and dozens of men-bashing best sellers. Gays are protected under every law in the book, but they'll get thrown out of bars on the first display of affection towards each other. Talk show audiences cheer heartily when famous athletes disclose that they caught AIDS from a hetero-sexual, not homo-sexual encounter. Ah... I'm being harsh... maybe they were cheering the fact that if viruses are not prejudiced, it should be a snap for homo sapiens to do the same? Slavery was abolished at the cost of a civil war, but an ex neo-Nazi, Grand Wizard of the KKK will get enough donations to campaign to be the next President of the United States.

Not that there can be no benefits from going this political route, and perhaps a few perfunctory letters to our elected officials could yield surprises. But as a group of people, we only have so much "energy" and in my mind, that energy should be concentrated on directly attaining our goals.

Internally, we must work to help ourselves. We must build our own community and make it an entity which builds self-acceptance, confidence, strength and independence to those new members who decide to join it. It must be a place where people quickly learn that all their angst was caused not by who they are, but was caused from a lack of awareness, of ignorance and of isolation. That these things came about due to the encumbrances that society has imposed as well as the mechanisms described earlier. They must learn that angst was for nothing and there is no use justifying that angst by worrying yourself right into the grave.

It is of course no good that we build this "community" only to isolate ourselves from society. Energies must also be concentrated externally. That energy must be expended by directly interacting with society. I don't see the point of wasting time and effort by asking for permission or legitimacy from other "groups" or politicians. This is a harder path, a scarier path with no flash & bang to mark successes. At the same time it can be fun, it can be exciting, and our gains will be of much better quality and permanence. In that respect I do agree with Nikki: that as individuals, and as a group of people we're approaching a point where we're going to

Book Review: The Crone

Barbara G. Walker's book *The Crone* gave me some cause for reflection. Women have the same potential to commit the same spectrum of sins with equal intensity as men, and power can corrupt women and men equally. Women these days do not have equal opportunity and rights with men. This is still an ongoing struggle and we don't need to look at a massacre in Montreal or hear a judge's statement that a three year old female "incited" an adult male into an indecent act. I have seen events around me: an applicant for a position is not even considered a candidate because she would not fit into the masculine milieu of power; nursing staff initiatives are trivialized because of feminine origins, but when the same idea comes from a man, it is an idea whose time has come. I see squabbling, turf wars, bluster, king-of-the-mountain mind games, trashing and other chicanery, and outright loot and plunder mentality, and this is among people (mostly men, and all masculine) who consider themselves friends and among bosom buddies. This same group shuts out the non-violent, nurturing, caring, co-operative proponents because such an approach undermines the sacred masculine myths of dominance, omnipotence, omniscience, which can be summarized as "might makes right", or rule by intimidation.

Feminists want something other than equality: elevated consciousness. It is politically wise to sell concepts as equal pay, etc. because these are measurable advances, but the significant goal is human evolution. Ecologists don't want equal rights to pollute the environment: can you imagine Farley Mowat heading

up a seal hunt, David Suzuki launching a logging operation or Greenpeace acquiring a nuclear powered protest ship? We are all already equal, but are not perceived to be because of institutionalized blindness. It is said that Lincoln freed the slaves, but they were always free people. They were enslaved by malevolent, un-human exploiters who were themselves morally blind and slaves to a chauvinistic and soulless ethic, and this involved both males and females.

Genotype is not the issue. Sexism is dead, but many men and women still try to resurrect the idol. There is no dichotomy in the spiritual realm as Walker's book *The Crone* elaborates in reviewing religious perceptions. God/Goddess is one, both and neither male or female. These are paradoxes, but God/Goddess has no limits. Feminist literature is not only politically oriented to specific realizable objectives, but a significant portion is allegorical and deals with the maturation and enhancement of the spiritual dimension within each of us, while increasing our awareness of ourselves and of each other, and our relationship with our world. God/Goddess created this world and we should complete it with the same spirit.

Feminism is not new: it is a manifestation of the indomitable spirit of people, the abhorrence of idolatry, the revulsion of human sacrifice in the name of secularism or humanism. Feminism is an affirmation of life in all its forms, and a recognition of a universal connectedness. And that is why I am a feminist.

Karen Hope

have to stand up and be counted. I'm not sure we agree on the mechanics of going about that.

Concurrent with all this, what we really have to do, is help change the philosophy with which society looks at life, not just crossdressers. We are not going to go anywhere trying to sell people on the joys of wearing pantyhose or of femininity by males. We must transcend crossdressing. What we have to help do is encourage a different level of prejudices and values; something that goes deeper than the surface qualities which are so often used in today's world.

Now from what I've seen of administrative bureaucracy and manipulation, trying to "lobby" politicians to do the above for us, would be akin to running through giant marshmallows. It would be strangely exhilarating at first, and one would make an impression. Eventually though, when the novelty of the exercise wore off, one would realize that one wasn't really going anywhere.

The political system as it exists is simply not structured to respond to us. It was structured in response to a different time, and a different philosophy. If you look at history, every change in the form of government, from dictatorships, to monarchies, to liberal democracy, has been preceded by some landmark change in philosophy. We must not

get sucked into politics. We must become philosophers. That is where our fight is, and it is being waged right now.

Poor Spelling and 'Womyn' Induced Stress - An Emotional Response

"MAN" is not a dirty word. I cannot appreciate how the mentality that cannot even bear to see the word "MAN" in "woMAN", will ever be tolerant of a MAN who wants to dress up like one. I have no intention of deriding my maleness, just to get a few chuckles of approval for my feminine side. The use of "womyn" smacks of puritanical zealotry; of repressed individuals who find "meaning" by participating in acronymic social-conscious groups that stick their holier than thou noses in everyone's business. They say they want a world without prejudice. What they really want is legislated equality. They want everyone put on a continuous bell curve. A world where everyone is judged the same no matter how good or bad they are. A world bereft of critical judgement. A world of institutionalized mediocrity. It sucks. We can do better than that.

Belinda Doree



SFX: NATURAL SOUND



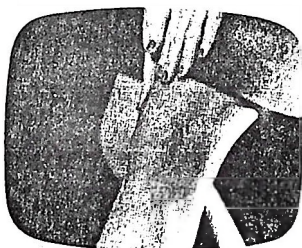
GIRL: May I help you, Sir?
MAN: Yes, stick 'em up.



GIRL: Oh! I see you're wearing Beautymist Panty Hose.



MAN: Yeah? How did you know?



GIRL: I wear them myself. They fit just perfectly.



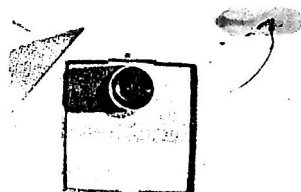
They're so soft and smooth and comfortable.



And so sheer! I mean, they really improve your appearance.



MAN: Oh, they do?



GIRL: Yes, would you smile for the camera, please?



DRAMATIC MUSIC



DRAMATIC MUSIC



ANNCR: Somehow, everything looks better through Beautymist.
GIRL: Especially your legs.